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LARGEST DRUG BUST IN COUNTY HISTORY NETS 33 ARRESTS

Largest Drug Bust in County History Nets 33 Arrests

NEWS REPORT / AUG 20 2020 12:23 AM / BY / 31 COMMENTS / READS 6250

Update by Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office

At approximately 3:04 a.m. [Wednesday] morning, Santa Barbara Sheriff's detectives, patrol deputies, and personnel with allied agencies intercepted a panga boat at Arroyo Quemada beach that was carrying 3,164 pounds of methamphetamine, making this the largest drug seizure in the history of Santa Barbara County. It is also one of the largest methamphetamine seizures in the nation's history. Detectives from Santa Barbara County Special Investigations Bureau were assisted by Sheriff's K9 Units, County Air Support and outside agencies including the Ventura County Sheriff's Office, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Homeland Security, FBI, United States Coast Guard, California State Parks Police and the California Highway Patrol K9 and Coastal Division Air Operations. This interception was part of an extensive investigation and cooperative effort by all of the agencies involved.

"Today's seizure of a panga boat illicitly smuggling more than a ton and a half of methamphetamine into our county and the arrest of the 33 suspects responsible for transporting and unloading its ruinous cargo was a major milestone in counter-drug operations in Santa Barbara County," said Sheriff Bill Brown. "Drug cartels, smugglers and illicit narcotic dealers know no international, state or local boundaries. This successful operation was made possible only through the collaborative investigative and operational efforts of local, state and federal authorities. We will never know how many lives were saved from overdose or addictive misery as a result of this exceptional law enforcement action."

The panga boat, which originated in Mexico, was tracked to the shore of Arroyo Quemada beach. It is a 40-foot homemade boat equipped with three 300-horsepower Yamaha engines. The arrestees include 29 adult males, 1 adult female and 3 juveniles. The 30 adults were transported by jail van and transported to the Main Jail for conspiracy (felony), and transportation of narcotics for sale (felony). Two of the suspects, Ricardo Desales and Fernando Arroyo, attempted to flee and were both bitten while being apprehended by Sheriff's K9 units. They were both medically cleared, and booked with an additional charge of resisting arrest (misdemeanor). All of the adult suspects were booked at the Main Jail, the juveniles were released to their parents and their identities are not available for publication. This case will be prosecuted by the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office pending review by the United States Attorney.

SUSPECTS ARRESTED

Name	Age	Residency
Gonzales, Antonia	33	Riverside, Ca.
Alvarez, Juan	43	Pomona, Ca
Padilla, Jesse	30	Whittier, Ca.
Ortega, Noe	37	Jurupa Valley, Ca.
Carrillo-Galvan, Santigo	53	Goleta, Ca.
Barrios, Joel	50	Bell, Ca.
Transito-Alejo, Enrique	58	Goleta, Ca.
Ortega, Aldolfo	72	Mira Loma, Ca.
Saenz-Avila, Mario	35	Goleta, Ca.
Ortega, Enrique	25	Mira Loma, Ca.
Loza, Saul	29	Goleta, Ca.
Moreno-Sepulveda, Gabriel	31	Santa Barbara, Ca.
Valles-Vasquez, Rogelio	61	Santa Barbara, Ca.
Sosa, Israel	38	Goleta, Ca.
Franco-Gonzalez, Indargo	51	Moreno Valley, Ca.
Mojardin, Felix	25	Goleta, Ca.
Martinez, Rodolfo	59	Santa Barbara, Ca.
Lopez-Felix, Oswaldo	37	Goleta, Ca.
Arzate-Garcia, Salomon	43	Riverside, Ca.
Guevara-Valencia, Vicente	58	Mira Loma, Ca.
Ayala, Henry	62	Whittier, Ca.
Armendariz, Brian	26	Santa Barbara, Ca.
Joanico, Mariano	35	Goleta, Ca.
Zavala-Luna, Pedro	41	Santa Barbara, Ca.
Pacheco, Ernesto	32	Los Angeles, Ca.
Desales, Ricardo	51	Anaheim, Ca.
Rodriguez-Galvez, Luis	44	Whittier, Ca.
Martinez, Alexis	24	Santa Barbara, Ca.
Arroyo, Fernando	42	Moreno Valley, Ca.
Franco-Gonzalez, Humberto	54	Santa Barbara, Ca.

[All booking photos are available here]

By an edhat reader

In the early morning hours of August 19, Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Deputies, assisted by other agencies, seized a 'Panga' boat on the shore near Tajiguas, taking a number of suspects into custody. The U.S. Border Patrol took possession of the boat. At one point helicopter observers reported ten suspects on foot in the area.

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31 COMMENTS

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A-1597888159 AUG 19, 2020 06:49 PM REPLY

Thank you, SBSO! Good work. Keep it up.

NOTYOUAGAIN AUG 19, 2020 10:04 PM REPLY

i say the quicker we stop fighting these things, the better.
it's all inevitable anyway.

GETOFFMYLAWN AUG 19, 2020 07:37 PM REPLY

Meth on board. You almost need sheriff staked out overnight in that spot. Its a very known spot for smuggling

NOTYOUAGAIN AUG 19, 2020 10:04 PM REPLY

if only we can get these smugglers from transporting meth to doing math.
i mean.. how different are they.. really?

SANDY1 AUG 19, 2020 07:53 PM REPLY

10 people , that's at least 100k in cargo right there.

D8VANILLA AUG 19, 2020 09:54 PM REPLY

The drug boat, which originated in Mexico, was tracked to the shore of Arroyo Quemada beach. It is a 40-foot homemade boat equipped with three 300-horsepower Yamaha engines. The sheriff's office said 29 men 1 woman and 3 juveniles were arrested.

"Drug cartels, smugglers and illicit narcotic dealers know no international, state or local boundaries. This successful operation was made possible only through the collaborative investigative and operational efforts of local, state and federal authorities.
Detectives from Santa Barbara County Special Investigations Bureau were assisted by Sheriff's K9 Units, County Air Support and outside agencies including the Ventura County Sheriff's Office, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Homeland Security, FBI, United States Coast Guard, California State Parks Police and the California Highway Patrol K9 and Coastal Division Air Operations.

DOULIE AUG 20, 2020 07:58 AM REPLY

It appears SBPD was not involved. If not, I have to wonder, why not?

TAGDES AUG 20, 2020 10:13 AM REPLY

Doulie, this is not anywhere near SBPD jurisdiction...mutual aid with VCSO is typical for inter agency of the same type, not for local police.

A-1597944935 AUG 20, 2020 10:35 AM REPLY

SBPD may have been involved since many were city residents - perhaps part of any initial investigations and surveillance.

DOULIE AUG 20, 2020 12:32 PM REPLY

TAGDES - I understand the city/county jurisdiction authority. I don't agree Ventura SO was involved simply because it is also a sheriff's department and not a police department. Ventura SO has no more jurisdiction in SB county than SBPD under these circumstances. It's my understanding the SBPD and SBSO often assist one another in many of their investigations that cross each others jurisdiction. May just be a simple reporters error that excluded the PD from the article. If the PD was not involved, I'm just interested in learning (why) they were not involved. Bottom line, investigators should be commended for their work leading to this seizure.

GIZMO1 AUG 19, 2020 10:01 PM REPLY

Book and release em- Thank You Gov Newscum

PITMIX AUG 20, 2020 07:38 AM REPLY

Provide actual info that your assertion is true. Highly doubt that it is. What is going on with the personal attacks on Edhat?

MTNDRIVER AUG 20, 2020 09:41 AM REPLY

Why would SBPD be involved? Took place in County, not City.

NOTYOUAGAIN AUG 19, 2020 10:03 PM REPLY

i don't think this is good. i mean.. our country is changing.. and this type of stuff needs to change too. now if they don't want it to come by boat, but want it to come fedex.. that would be ok.. but it has to come.
we have to turn into mexico.. and south america. we just have to. the gap will be closed. from little portland
to tijuana..
this land was made for you.. (drug addicts and rioters) and me..

SACJON AUG 20, 2020 09:51 AM REPLY

NOTYOUAGAIN - how do you do line breaks like that in your comments? Can anyone do that?

LCP112233 AUG 20, 2020 04:20 PM REPLY

Sacjon, I think
you just
hit the
enter key to do the line breaks.
At least, it works on my keyboard.

Comment has been deleted by edhat

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CHILLINGRILLIN AUG 20, 2020 03:04 AM REPLY

I wonder how many boats slipped through for every one that is caught by the sheriff. There are probably at least three hiding in his mustache waiting for a moonless night.

SANDY1 AUG 20, 2020 06:48 AM REPLY

That Super lab sure could use a shiny new MOAB. :)

Comment has been deleted by edhat

PITMIX AUG 20, 2020 07:41 AM REPLY

They've only ever had one stop of meth shipments into the US? Not true. Very difficult to stop the lucrative illegal drug trade. Maybe we can make the truckers' jobs so they don't have to do them exhausted?

PSTARSR AUG 20, 2020 07:48 AM REPLY

you are aware that the ingredients in meth, are inside your "allergy" medicine you take daily, and have to have to "function". Dont forget the the LEGAL forms of this drug that are pushed to every corner of the globe under the guise of "health". I agree with Pit, maybe stop making truckers drive 32hrs a day to make enough money to survive.

Comment has been deleted by edhat

VVORKER AUG 20, 2020 08:14 AM REPLY

Driving that boat, high on meth
Senior Jones you better watch your speed
Trouble ahead, trouble behind
And you know that notion just crossed my mind
This old engine makes it on time
Leaves Tijuana 'bout a quarter to nine
Hits channel islands at seventeen two
At a quarter to ten you know it's travelin' again

I am amazed they had 33 people on the boat too...
There is some great Coast Guard footage of previous Ponga busts on DVIDS.

Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast Pursues Panga
https://www.dvidshub.net/video/669728/coast-guard-cutter-steadfast-pursues-panga

SANTABARBARAOBSERVER AUG 20, 2020 08:46 AM REPLY

Does anyone else find it odd that everyone of these people are listed with US addresses? Are we sure this boat originated in Mexico? Wouldnt DHS have eyes on this border?

Z AUG 20, 2020 12:22 PM REPLY

Of course they had California addresses. They were supposed to be the last-mile mules. It's a lot of work getting a ton and a half of meth from the beach to the freeway. Mexico seems likely, it's down hill from Canada but a long trip. Yes, DHS has eyes on this border - Coasties tracked the boat in and alerted the locals (not alert Sheriff's radar operators).

A-1597938916 AUG 20, 2020 08:55 AM REPLY

This criminal enterprise lives amongst us in Santa Barbara ad Goleta. Eradicate their criminal enterprise. We don't want them destroying our lives or our community. Thank you for tracking so many of them back to their source, and not letting them catch on they were being watched. Drugs do not belong in Santa Barbara. Zero tolerance is the only message we need to send out.

A-1597938916 AUG 20, 2020 08:55 AM REPLY

Thank you to our local policing agencies and federal government for this impressive action. This sounds like a long investigation with many agencies involved, a substantial amount of narcotics seized and what looks to be a large conspiracy of California drug sellers. Hopefully this will alleviate at least some of the suffering that meth usages causes, as well as new addiction and death.

SBZZ AUG 20, 2020 08:57 AM REPLY

Mind boggling bust - Bravo!

TAGDES AUG 20, 2020 10:34 AM REPLY

Why did they change the photo of the panga found here with the 3, 300 hp motors to the piece of junk scow now pictured with no motors. Also the panga found here was not home made. Luckily a local news still shows what actually happened here with close ups of the clothing and gas containers.

TAGDES AUG 20, 2020 11:18 AM REPLY

Check that... it was just a bad photo of the the original panga.......should a looked at my computer rather than a cheap cell phone.

LCP112233 AUG 20, 2020 10:57 AM REPLY

Nice to see one good bust after all the empty boats that have been found on our shorelines. Scary to think how much of that stuff really gets in. Thanks law enforcement!

CHILLINGRILLIN AUG 20, 2020 03:22 PM REPLY

Does anyone seriously believe the cartels are behind this? These are small-fry, the real quantities are handed off to bribed captains of fishing boats and container ships offshore.

Comment has been deleted by edhat

SANDY1 AUG 20, 2020 03:54 PM REPLY

Bet Mr. Felix doesn't feel so Happy and Lucky now.

✓ Your comment has been posted.

VVORKER AUG 20, 2020 04:51 PM REPLY

I found it odd 33 people could of been on the boat with all that meth...sounds like the cartels are turning on each other...Adios MS13!!
33 is the highest ritual for free masons , what a coincidence!
Wonder how many already got cerveza sickness, just heard from CDC that it is very bad just 200 miles away!
Can't wait to see ponga boats full of covid refugees on the coast next year this time!! To hell with the meth, we need the hydrocolorquine!

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